

United States Senate

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December 13, 2005

The Honorable Michael Chertoff
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

Three months after first writing to the President requesting a copy of the current FEMA disaster recovery plan for a serious earthquake in California, I finally received a response from FEMA.

However, I did not receive a specific response plan for earthquakes in California. Instead, I was referred to the National Response Plan, which is a generic plan of response for all terrorist attacks and natural disasters in the United States.

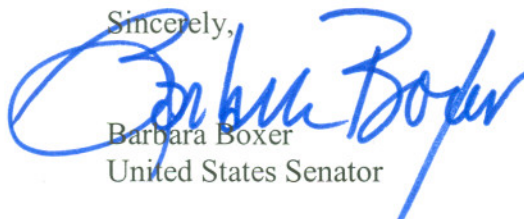
Based on this response, it is evident that there is no specific federal plan for dealing with a major earthquake in California. This is unacceptable.

Even if a generic response plan were capable of covering all disasters, the National Response Plan was released in December 2004 – before Katrina. The plan obviously failed. FEMA was not able to deal with the aftermath of a hurricane – an event that was anticipated – which calls into serious doubt the ability of FEMA to undertake a successful response to a major earthquake in California.

I urge you to develop a specific emergency response plan, in concert with California's state government, for an earthquake in California, in case the earthquake is of such magnitude that the state is unable to respond. If you are not going to develop a plan, I want to know why.

I look forward to your prompt reply.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator